

## *A New Standard for High School Graduates*

**S**eniors in the class of 2004 will be the first California public school students who must pass a High School Exit Examination (HSEE) to receive a high school diploma. The purpose of the new graduation requirement, authorized by state law, is to:

- ▶ help improve student achievement in high school
- ▶ make sure that graduates meet rigorous state standards in reading, writing, and mathematics

The HSEE will be given for the first time in spring 2001 to students in grade 9, who may wish to volunteer. It will not be required. Beginning in 2001–02, students in grade 10 will be required to take the exam. Students will have opportunities each year to retake that part of the exam not passed. They are to be given special instruction if needed.

This is a major addition to the district's requirements for high school graduation. School staffs will be working closely with students and parents to help implement this change.

### *What will happen if students don't pass the HSEE?*

Students will be able to retake the test until all the portions are passed. They will retake only those portions of the test not previously passed. Your district and/or school will provide additional instruction for students who need it. Summer school programs will also be provided.

### *How will parents and students find out more about the HSEE?*

At the beginning of the 2000–01 school year, parents and students will be sent detailed information about the HSEE. More information also will be available at each student's school or the district office.

### *For more information...*

If you have any questions about the HSEE:

- ▶ contact our school office on weekdays from \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. to \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.
- ▶ come to back-to-school night next fall
- ▶ check the California Department of Education website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/hsee/hsee.html> (Internet)

## *Attention Parents*

### *Introducing California's New Graduation Requirement...*



### *The High School Exit Examination*

# Questions and Answers for Parents

## **What is the High School Exit Examination (HSEE)?**

State law, passed in 1999, authorized the development of the High School Exit Examination (HSEE). Students in California public schools will have to pass this exam to receive a high school diploma, beginning with the graduating class of 2004.

## **Who must take the HSEE?**

Beginning in spring 2001, ninth-grade students may, but will not be required to, take the exam. Beginning in 2001-02, all tenth-grade students will have to take the HSEE. Students in the graduating class of 2004 will have to pass all parts of the test to receive a diploma. Ninth graders who pass the test will not have to retake it.

## **What happens if tenth graders don't pass the HSEE?**

Requiring the exam at grade 10 will give students opportunities during the next two years to receive additional instruction and to retake the exam or either part not passed.

## **What about students who are not fluent in English?**

If students do not have the needed English language skills to be tested, the district may have that student wait to take the HSEE. Testing may be delayed for up to 24 calendar months from enrollment in the California public school system, until the student has completed six months of instruction in reading, writing, and comprehension in English. The student must then pass the HSEE in English to receive their high school diploma.

## **Will special education students have to take the HSEE?**

Yes. Special education students cannot receive their high school graduation diploma without passing the HSEE. The HSEE may be administered with appropriate accommodations as required in each student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

## **What if parents do not want their student tested?**

All students will be required to pass the HSEE to get a high school diploma from a California public school.

## **Who decides what the HSEE should cover?**

A High School Exit Examination Standards Panel, appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, reviewed state standards in English-language arts and mathematics and recommended standards they felt students should master to graduate from high school. Questions for the HSEE, based on the selected standards, are being field tested to make sure they are of the highest quality. After field testing, the HSEE must be adopted by the State Board of Education in October 2000.

## **What will the reading and writing portion of the HSEE cover?**

The proposed reading and writing portion addresses state standards through grade 10. In reading, this covers vocabulary, comprehension, and analysis of informational and literary texts. The writing portion covers writing strategies, applications, and the conventions of standard English.

## **What will the mathematics portion of the HSEE cover?**

The proposed portion in mathematics addresses state standards through algebra I. This will include fundamental skills in mathematics as well as algebra I.

## **What can students do to prepare for the HSEE?**

It will be important that students take classes that include instruction in state content standards for English-language arts and math.

## **How can parents help their students pass the test?**

Parents should ask their student's teachers or principal if the school's curriculum is aligned to state content standards in English-language arts and mathematics. Parents will want to know

- ▶ how teachers are helping students achieve these standards.
- ▶ how parents can help their students at home.